

**APPROVED**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**20 September 2001**

Projects Reviewed

Pacific Northwest Aquarium  
Open Space Strategy  
Zymogenetics- Street Vacation  
Design Review Update

Convened: 8:30am

Adjourned: 3:00pm

Commissioners Present

Donald Royse  
Tom Bykonen  
Ralph Cipriani  
Jack Mackie  
Iain M. Robertson  
David Spiker  
Sharon Sutton  
Tory Laughlin Taylor

Staff Present

John Rahaim  
Layne Cubell  
Brad Gassman  
Sally MacGregor

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**20 Sept 2001 Project: Pacific Northwest Aquarium**

Phase: Concept Design

Previous Reviews: 16 December 1999 (Scope Briefing), 21 September 2000 (Conceptual Design), 18 January 2001 (Conceptual Design), 15 March 2001 (Briefing), 17 May 2001 (Briefing)

Presenters: Bert Gregory, Architects

Doug Streeter, Terry Farrell and Partners, Architects (Conference Call)

Attendees: Brodie Bain, Weinstein Copeland

John Braden, Seattle Aquarium

Jim Clarke, Seattle Aquarium Society

Lee Copeland, Weinstein Copeland

Linda Dickson, Seattle Aquarium Society

Scott Kemp, Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU)

Carolyn Law, Artist, Planner

Ethan Melone, Strategic Planning Office

Steve Pearce, Strategic Planning Office

Catherine Stanford, Pike Place Market, PDA

Konning Tam, Architects

Bob Wicklein, The Seneca Group

George Willoughby, President, Seattle Aquarium Society

Michael Woodland, Seattle Aquarium, Department of Parks and Recreation

Time: 1.5 hours (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00041)

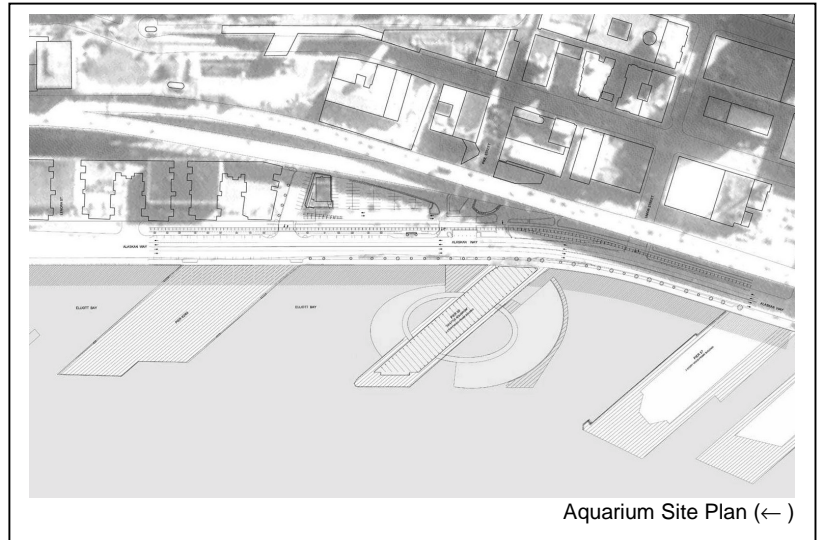
**Action: The Commission appreciates the presentation and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.**

- The Commission appreciates the progress that the design team has made as they have redeveloped this design for the new site;
- encourages the team to develop the design concept as a historic structure surrounded by a new modern building curvilinear forms that contains nature;
- urges the team to simplify the design and the juxtaposition of the spiral and ovals forms, and the historic shed, and believes that the geometric relationship between these structures should be further refined within the building and outside of the building to make it readily apparent to visitors, rather than just in plan;
- encourages the team to study the proportion of open spaces and urges the team to consider whether or not the sea stack within one of these spaces is an appropriate architectural addition;
- encourages the team to develop the design parti three-dimensionally from the water level to the roof;
- encourages the team to develop the design of the roof as a screen element with the functional needs in mind, protecting the exhibits from external wildlife, and simplify the roof shape, letting the exhibition itself become the main feature rather than having the roof overwhelm the structure;
- would like the team to develop public access to the end of the pier, hoping that this becomes a delightful, small urban park;
- would like to see further development of the external materials, hoping that

**these will further clarify and complement the design;**

- **encourages the team to continue to consider the view of the building from the water and the city; and**
- **approves the concept design for this project.**

The design team presented the concept design for the Pacific Northwest Aquarium (Aquarium), which has changed significantly since the last design presentation a year ago. These changes reflect the Landmarks Board designation of Pier 59 as a historical structure, and the pier, deck, pilings, and shed are incorporated into the new design. This design alternative retains Pier 59 as part of the Aquarium, and places a major exhibit pavilion to the south. The team met with the Landmarks Board early in the process to review the basic principles and diagrams driving the design. The design would incorporate immersive exhibits within the Aquarium, by recreating the habitat of the natural world. The exhibit pavilion should be open, with vegetation incorporated among rocks. The team also worked to identify the appropriate form for this waterfront building.



The team presented the primary design principles guiding the current stage of concept design; these principles reflect the historic nature of the site as this design incorporates the structure and shed of Pier 59. The trapezoidal pier geometry is unique, and drives the form and structure of the design. The team would also like to preserve the continuity of the shed. The north and south views of the elevation are important, and the team would like to maintain the view of the entire length of the shed. The team would also like to recognize the historical use of sheds as warehouses, by which materials were primarily loaded and unloaded through the sides of the shed. The gabled facades of the shed are a different shape than the building section; this reflects a civic gesture to the city and Elliot Bay. There is also space for signage on the building, which belies the everyday nature of the shed as a warehouse. The team has also examined how the structural frame of the shed relates to the design of the new structure.

As the team developed the concept design for the Aquarium, they examined the relationship between the Aquarium program and the existing building. The shed is a man-made artifact, while the Aquarium program represents an abstract natural experience. The primary design parti represents an artifact in nature, and man in nature. The new structure will envelop the historic pier, and the old structure will act as a spine that is displayed as a special object within the new Aquarium.

The natural exhibit landscape will be differentiated from the urban landscape and building form to create a “threshold” of transition. This contrast with the existing shed, distinguishing the new from the old, is the team’s key concept as they develop the immersive habitat. While these two concepts differ, the team has also identified the need for a unifying geometry to link the new structure with the old. The curve and spiral form will continue to generate the central circulation ring. The spiral and curved building form will also be developed to balance the buildings to the north and the south of the shed. The design of the north and south portions of the building will reflect their respective contexts, as the north portion will relate to the waterfront park, and the south portion will be between the two old piers. The design of the

Aquarium will operate as a whole, as the continuing curved gesture will generate the inner and outer form of the new construction. The design and the building footprint also reflect the optimal views to and from the waterfront. On the south side of Pier 59, the height limit is fifty-five feet, which is the ridge level of Pier 59, and to the north of Pier 59, the height limit is forty-five feet.

The Aquarium program is contained in the first, second, and third floors of the building. The entrance, a small deck that spans the salmon corridor, is at the ground floor and directs people to the primary circulation ring. From this entrance, people can proceed to the central space of this transparent shed, which contains the ticketing area and lobby facilities. Visitors would go to the second floor, moving through the shed skin and along the southern area of the building. This circulation ring is seen metaphorically as a necklace, while the exhibits along the path are considered to be the jewels of the necklace, as all of the exhibits are accessed by entrances off the major circulation path. These exhibits would include both temporary and permanent exhibits. The third level would represent the northwest rocky coast. The roof has been designed as a canopy that would contain and protect this immersive habitat.

The visitor will also experience the volume of the Pier 59 historic shed from the initial entry. The second floor edge has been pulled away from the edge of the building to create a bridge, which connects the circulation ring from the east to the west. The Aquarium restaurant will be located on this level, at the central location for the entire scheme. This level would connect to the temporary exhibit space and could also serve as a major entertainment center. The servicing for the building would come through the south side of Pier 59, and the main access point would be opposite from the main entrance. There will also be a major retail frontage on the east side of Pier 59. A ticketing area will also be along the northern edge, opening and addressing the entrance deck, at the foot of the Pike Street Hillclimb. The design will also articulate and accentuate the arrival and sense of place at the entry to the Aquarium.

As the team continues to develop the design, they will address the public access for the perimeter of the Aquarium and the end of the pier. The access to the northern end of the pier will be developed to address the new waterfront park.

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Recognizing that the roof forms in the section drawing are very activated, while the roof forms represented by the model are fairly flat, would like to know which representation is more accurate.
  - Proponents stated that the activated roof form represents the accurate design proposal. The roof is a form based on movement, with three-dimensionality, rather than a lid. The roof may or may not cover the entire exhibit on this level. This roof form would also act as an edge or foil that would wrap the corners and become the walls of this exhibition space. The opacity of the material would change as well. There may be some netting incorporated into the roof design, in order to retain some creatures.
- Would like to know why an architectural foil would screen and hide the most important feature of the building. Hopes that the “natural” exhibit would grow and flourish to a grand scale. Hopes that people would be able to acknowledge the presence of this exhibit from afar, to further represent this Pacific Northwest terrain. At the Tennessee Aquarium, one is able to see trees through the glass roof from afar.
  - Proponents stated that they are not sure if the vegetation will mature quickly. Further stated that the foil is also intended to provide visitor protection against the wind and the rain. Further stated that the screen will not be opaque, but it will act as a veil, and the design does not intend to hide the landscape. The glass will be reflective, and it will be diffused with louvers.

- Would like to know if the existing waterfront park will be removed, and if the design relies on this removal.
  - Proponents stated that the existing waterfront park will be removed. This would be replaced by additional park space to the north. This new waterfront park would be located at Pier 62/63.
- Believes that the unifying theme of the circulation spiral is very graceful. Is concerned about the faceted nature of the roof, and would like to know how the roof screen will be linked with the spiral geometry.
  - Proponents stated that the curvature of the plan is very strong, and the screen elements would have to be driven by the geometry of the plan. The pile structure below deck may be radial. This radial movement may be expressed in the design of the structure. The perception of the building from above would be further improved by the landscaped architectural edge around the perimeter. Further stated that this would be developed throughout the design process.
- In the section drawing, would like the team to describe the vertical element.
  - Proponents stated that this would be a sea stack, located within a very large water space, to create a sculpted, focal element. This may an extension of the rock-scape and this could be a staging area for changing exhibits, or an opportunity for space for demonstration work. Further stated that this element could be very abstract, but could contain some functional elements.
- Believes that the spiral is very clear in plan, would like to know if the team has considered developing this spiral in section as well, perhaps as a ramp that rises from the first floor to the second floor, then continuing to the upper level.
  - Proponents agreed that the unifying spiral might work in section as well as in plan, and this would be addressed through further design development.
- Is intrigued by the spiral design parti, but is not convinced that the parti represents the connection between built form and natural form. Believes that the spiral connects two very distinct, dramatic, and geometrically regular forms. Is concerned by the irregularity of the roof structure. Understands the climate and exhibition concerns requiring this roof, but does not believe these shapes work with the lyrical and deliberate forms.
  - Proponents appreciate this type of comment and stated that it will help the team further develop the design. Further stated that these comments would further inform the ordering geometry.
- Believes that the spiral is central to the scheme, and this is easy to see in plan. Believes that people would not be able to perceive this spiral, and questions why the design team has developed the spiral design parti so strongly. Is not convinced that the spiral is the unifying geometry.
- Is concerned about the large area of open space and water in between the buildings, and does not believe that this scale is appropriate.
  - Proponents agreed that there may be a disconnect between the spiral and many other design decisions. Does not believe that the experience would be diminished by this design. Further stated that people would be able to move from one structure or exhibit to another, in a fluid or minimal way.
- Recognizes that the diagram shows a connection between the Aquarium and the city, but does not see a physical connection or relation between the spiral and the urban environment beyond. Would like to see a representation of this geometry beginning or ending. Would like visitors to perceive the

spiral and is concerned that the spiral ends inside, at the oval ramp. Believes that there should be another oval or ellipse expression that would mirror or counter the interior circulation geometry, against which the roof scapes could be developed.

- Proponents stated that through the development of this design, the team did focus on the purity and the legibility of these geometries. Further stated the spiral, ending at the entry threshold, would provide an opportunity to clarify this geometry.
- Agrees that there is some tension between the geometry and the roof shape. Believes that the version represented in the model is more clear and pure.
- Would like to know for sure whether or not there would be nets attached to the roof and the roof structure. Recognizing that there may be exhibits that would attract birds, believes that nets would change the section diagram dramatically. Believes that this is a strong, functional exhibit question that needs to be addressed. Believes that the scheme would benefit from simplification and clarification.
- Would like to know what will happen to the existing Fitzgerald water fountain sculpture that will need to be removed to accommodate this construction, and would like to know if it will be accommodated within the site.
  - Proponents stated that it is the City's responsibility to relocate the fountain, and the intention is to relocate in the park, along the waterfront.
- Would like to know if there will be public access to the end of the pier. Would like to know if the team is committed to providing pier-end access.
  - Proponents stated that there are requirements for public access to the end of the pier. Further stated that the team must determine and develop the most usable access. Further stated that the design must be developed so that people will want to access the end of the pier.
- Encourages the team to look at the pier ends like small urban spaces or parks. Hopes that the commitment to this part of the design is in the budget.
- Does not believe that the overall concept truly works as a man-made artifact within nature, with the new building representing nature, and the shed representing the man-made artifact. Believes that the true concept is a historic man-made structure that is now surrounded by a new man-made structure, and the driving part is the relationship between the two. Believes that this relationship could be developed towards a very successful and simplified design.
- Commends the team for the cohesion of the design, recognizing that the team has been working to comply with many specific and difficult parameters.
- Believes that the tension between the new building and the old building offers many interesting opportunities. Would like to know if the team has begun to address how the exterior skin of the new building will relate to the existing shed.
  - Proponents stated that the team has considered the exterior materials of the new structure, but they have not been fully developed or addressed yet. Further stated that the team will be addressing substantial areas of visible, large-scale interior landscape, which would require a substantial structure below. The structure, substantial in its own right, requiring significant engineering, should be apparent, and the team believes that this structure should drive the architectural language of the exterior finishes. The team would like to establish a clear contrast between the Pier 59 and the new building.
- Encourages the team to develop the language of the multi-pronged piles, rather than single vertical piles, and believes that this would be an intriguing element to the waterfront. Believes that the separation between the architectural language of the new structure and Pier 59 should be represented

to and through the water level.

- Believes that the honesty represented through the design is commendable. Recognizes that the splaying of the piles would provide lateral support and support the weight of the materials.
- Is concerned that the sea stack sculpture will interfere with the open space between the buildings and is not consistent with the concept plan. Believes that the open space between the buildings should be left void.
  - Proponents stated that the sea stack is a request of the client. Further stated that it may become like an exhibit itself or it could be an out of water resting spot for real creatures.
- Believes that the sea stack could be appropriate, if the design were simplified. Recognizes that the program and exhibits are very complex, and hopes that the complexity does not become chaotic.
- Believes that the view of the Aquarium from the city and the water are much more appropriate than the design represented in previous schemes. Encourages the team to continue to consider the views of the Aquarium from the water and the city.

#### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- A representative from the Strategic Planning Office (SPO) encouraged the team to keep in mind the unknown future of the Alaskan Way Viaduct. The preferred alternative has not yet been identified, but the design team should keep in mind the imminent changes to the Seattle waterfront. Encouraged the team to recognize that the noise levels may increase or decrease.

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**20 Sept 2001 Project: Open Space Strategy**

Phase: Briefing

Previous Reviews: 5 October 2000 (Briefing), 17 May 2001 (Open Space Strategy/ Westlake Corridor South)

Presenter: John Rahaim, CityDesign

Attendees: Ethan Melone, Strategic Planning Office (SPO)  
Robert Scully, CityDesign

Time: 1.25 hours (SDC Ref. # 220 | DC00184)

**Discussion Summary:** The Commission appreciates the briefing and would like to make the following comments.

- The Commission is excited to review the Open Space Strategy in many steps as it develops;
- supports the design concept that incorporates an inner and outer ring, and encourages the team to develop the connections to the south end and strengthen the northern segment of the inner ring;
- applauds the link to the historical Olmsted vision for open space in this city and appreciates how this vision is used to develop the design concept for the future;
- supports the development of a pedestrian-oriented street hierarchy, hoping that the architectural language will be used to reinforce this hierarchy;
- encourages the team to recognize that open space should also be designed with security in mind, as an opportunity for urban relief and refuge;
- supports a hierarchy of open spaces, as some events call for large gathering areas, while people also look forward to small pocket parks;
- hopes that the Open Space Strategy includes democratic spaces, such as Pike Place Market and Seattle Center, and the connections to these spaces;
- urges the team to look at the connection to the stadia as well;
- encourages the team to develop a clear and politically accessible implementation strategy; and
- strongly supports this forward-looking urban design planning process, as it is the type of visionary effort that Seattle needs.

The Center City Open Space Strategy is a CityDesign project to create a comprehensive open space system as part of a larger *Connections and Places: A Center City Urban Design Strategy* to be implemented over the next ten years. The Center City Urban Design Forum clearly confirmed a need for a comprehensive and strategic open space strategy that would also address the waterfront, the urban ecosystem, and public art. CityDesign worked with the five downtown neighborhoods of the Center City to form a partnership to address the need for the Open Space Strategy. As Seattle's Center City develops, the increased density must in turn be balanced by amenities, such as open space. This Open Space Strategy, developed by Mithun, the project consultant, will identify opportunities for future public and private open spaces, and will recognize projects that are currently being planned. The Open Space Strategy also recognizes that the street system should be considered an open space system.



The consultants began the project with extensive analysis and data gathering. The focus is starting to become refined as the team has examined ideas from many of the different neighborhood plans. The team has resolved discrepancies between different neighborhood plans to focus these ideas and develop a design concept or parti, that the public could readily understand.

*Mission Statement: Seattle's Center City Open Space Strategy supports a commitment to urban vitality, eclecticism, sustainability, and equality in the urban center community as a reflection of Seattle's civic identity.*

*Guiding Principles:*

- *Create a strategy for an open space system that captures Seattle's imagination.*
- *Provide a framework to evaluate public and private investment opportunities for the public realm.*
- *Develop strategies to implement the principles of neighborhood plans.*
- *Capitalize on the opportunities within the existing public realm.*
- *Use an integrated approach that incorporates art, science, landscape and sustainability in the urban place-making process.*
- *Create awareness of the relationship between the natural and built environments.*
- *Use a pedestrian-first approach to provide desirable outdoor spaces that are within short walking distances for all types of users.*
- *Highlight Seattle's multi-dimensional attributes and natural features.*
- *Provide spaces that appeal to the multi-generational community.*

The team is working to develop a one hundred year vision with a ten-year implementation plan. The team has recognized that the original Olmsted vision for the city focused on improvements for the development of Seattle through one hundred years. While this system was an inter-connected system of parks and boulevards, the design of the open space system in downtown Seattle was not significantly developed. The Open Space Strategy design parti is proposed as a ring around the Center City, to complement the outer ring; these would be linked through various types of connections.

The team is beginning to develop the inner ring, which would include the Potlatch Trail. Parts of the inner ring pass over I-5, and other components within the inner ring will include the central waterfront. The team also hopes to develop avenues that link the downtown with other parts of the city. Currently, there is a street hierarchy that is based on vehicular volume. The team plans to develop an overlay of street hierarchy based on pedestrian movement. The team has also recognized that connections to the waterfront are necessary, but the alternative for the Alaskan Way Viaduct has not yet been identified.

The team also presented many of the visions in place for the waterfront pedestrian connections. The long-term vision connects every street through to the waterfront. The Pike Street Hillclimb and Harbor Steps are links that should be continued to the waterfront. Connections to the waterfront from Pioneer Square are also a priority, as all of the streets are at grade. Some connections to the waterfront, such as those between Broad Street and Galer Street, are impeded by the railroad tracks.

Through the Open Space Strategy, the team is also developing a design for the diagonal section of Westlake Avenue below Denny Way, as Seattle Transportation (SeaTran) is working on the north portion of Westlake Avenue. The southern portion of Westlake Avenue could become an *esplanade*, which would reduce the width of Westlake Avenue to a two-lane street, and add open green space to the eastern side of the street, with an opportunity for future transit. The *park block* scheme would close Westlake Avenue to vehicular traffic, creating park blocks; this would simplify the grid, in terms of typical traffic flow. The team has been speaking with the developers and owners along Westlake Avenue, and they are concerned by the prospect of closing Westlake Avenue. SeaTran has also requested a traffic study, that examines the impacts of this closure throughout surrounding blocks.

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Encourages the team to redevelop the mission statement to reflect the events that happened on September 11, 2001. Feels that these changes are needed to improve the public's view of open space as space that provides urban security, protection, and refuge. Believes that the aesthetic humanistic approach should also address security realities.
  - The CityDesign representative is concerned that, by adding words addressing security, the mission statement would become negative in its description of open space.
- Believes that positive connotations should be used to address the security of open space. Recognizes that people gathered in public open spaces, such as the International Fountain in Seattle Center, to mourn and reflect upon the events.
- Examining the original open space plan by the Olmsted Brothers, believes that open space was considered to be the release valve for the city. Recognizes that Seattle has so much open space around it and downtown Seattle needs some release to make the open space positive. Believes that the open space should relate to the natural environment, but the open space within the city should also relate to the civic environment of the city.
  - Representative stated that a civic space would also provide opportunities for demonstration, such as the WTO protests. Other important public civic spaces include Seattle Center and Pike Place Market. There should be more central spaces for this type of large gathering. The existing central gathering spaces should also become part of the urban fabric.
- Would like to know if the team has considered lidding parts of I-5.
  - Representative stated that I-5 could be lidded north of the existing Freeway Park, to Denny Way. The cost of lidding I-5 could, in the near future, be comparable to land cost in the downtown.
- Believes that Thomas Street is not pedestrian friendly and would like to know why it has been chosen as a pedestrian corridor. Recognizes that there is no "there" there, and does not even cross Aurora Avenue.
  - Representative stated that Thomas Street has actually been identified as a Green Street. Thomas Street was also identified by the neighborhood plan as a pedestrian connection.
- Believes that the openness and many of the undeveloped parcels along Thomas Street do provide an opportunity for changes.
- Is concerned that the Open Space Strategy focuses on areas to the north. Feels that there should be a link to the stadia to the south, and also hopes that the team will recognize that the character of the industrial area to the south will change.
  - Representative stated that it has been hard to identify connections to the International District, but the team will look to make better links to the southern neighborhoods.
- Encourages the team, as they develop a hierarchy of streets, to recognize that transportation community (Seattle Transportation) must comply with certain transportation classifications in order to meet federal requirements; these classifications are based on volumes.
  - Representative stated that they do not plan to replace any existing street hierarchy, but hopes to provide additional definitions of street uses through a matrix. Historically, the street hierarchy was apparent through different terminology, such as avenues,

boulevards, etc., rather than arterial or collector.

- Would like to know if the new Civic Center open space would be connected to the waterfront.
  - Representative stated that the Civic Center open space is part of the inner ring, at Fifth Avenue. There is no direct connection to the waterfront, but this idea will be considered.
- Would like to know if there will be long term considerations to design major green corridors that could be called Parkways, which conveys green space that is shared with the vehicles.
- Recognizes that traffic efficiency is based on the uses along the streets. As the team looks at the South Lake Union neighborhood and the unique geometry, encourages the team to look at the opportunity that could be similar to the Philadelphia's Center City to the Art Museum. Believes that this could become an urban street, rather than a suburban-type street, which Westlake Avenue starts to become, towards the north.
  - Representative stated that the public sector should set the stage to encourage a certain typology of development here. There are some concerns about implementation of these ideas, and hopes that some streets, through a regulatory system, could have special designations that would allow certain things to happen on this promenade, things that the City would not normally allow.
- Believes that, in order to create this diagonal axis, there should be a significant end to the axis.
- Recognizing that this is a pedestrian-first scheme, believes that the design should address the needed bus corridor.
  - Representative recognized that there is not sufficient bus service in South Lake Union.
- Strongly feels that the City should be working on an urban design strategy to address the physical form of the city. Recognizes that the political climate will be changing in the future, and would like to know what the Design Commission could do to promote the importance of this strategy.
  - Representative stated that there is a director-level client group, who will be stewards of the project. There will be a draft Open Space Strategy ready for circulation by early November.
- Encourages the team to develop a clear statement of how this is a value-added strategy. Believes that the next administration will guide the Open Space Strategy through the implementation stage and hopes this fact guides CityDesign as they determine how to promote the strategy.
  - Representative stated that there will be an Open Space Strategy open house in October, and to date, the public process has mostly been through presentations at various groups and organizations, and through the first open house in June.
- Encourages the team to provide strong images to support the strategy, and continue to depict the direct connection to the landscape, the water and the mountains, beyond.

**20 Sept 2001 Commission Business**

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|-------------------------|----|--|
| <b>ACTION ITEMS</b>     | A. | <u>TIMESHEETS</u>  |
|                         | B. | <u>MINUTES FROM 6 SEPTEMBER 2001</u> - APPROVED                              |
| <b>DISCUSSION ITEMS</b> | C. | <u>OUTSIDE COMMITMENT UPDATES</u>  |
|                         | D. | <u>STREET IMPROVEMENT MANUAL UPDATE</u> - KERN                               |
| <b>ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>    | E. | <u>LRRP RETREAT, 9/21/01</u> , 8AM-NOON, ALASKA BLDG. 15 <sup>TH</sup> FLOOR |

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**20 Sept 2001 Project: Zymogenetics**

Phase: Street Vacation- Pre-Petition

Presenters: Marty Goodman, The Justen Company  
 Rich Haag, Rich Haag and Associates  
 Kay Kornovich, MBT Architects  
 Kevin Teague, Foster, Pepper, Shefeleman

Attendees: Shinko Campos, Zymogenetics  
 William Justen, The Justen Company  
 Marc Ryan, Rich Haag and Associates  
 Marilyn Senour, Seattle Transportation (SeaTran)

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00247)

**Action:** The Commission thanked the team for the briefing and appreciates the opportunity to review this potential street vacation at an early pre-petition stage. The Commission would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Commission appreciates the team's concise review of the existing development and current public benefits;
- encourages the proponents to meet with the Eastlake community to review the proposed public benefit package, so the team can present the specific public benefit suggestions at the next Commission meeting;
- suggests that the team maintain the green edge at I-5 to the fullest extent possible, in order to soften this edge and mitigate some of the effects of the freeway;
- encourages the team to explore developing the WSDOT property to the north as a public benefit, to be maintained by ZymoGenetics;
- suggests that the public benefit package include specific benefits, rather than simple improvements to unimproved conditions, such as unimproved rights-of-way;
- encourages the team to consider non-physical public benefits, such as alternative transportation systems, e.g. the Flexcar™ system;
- encourages the team to clarify the public access within the site and the adjacent neighborhood;
- does not see any impediment for the team to continue to develop this proposal, but encourages further refinement of a public benefits package; and
- looks forward to reviewing this project again.

*"ZymoGenetics, Inc. is a targeted bioinformatics-driven company dedicated to the discovery and development of novel therapeutic agents used in the treatment and prevention of human illness."*

ZymoGenetics, Inc., is currently located on Eastlake Avenue, in the historic City Light steam plant on Lake Union. ZymoGenetics converted these buildings to laboratory space in 1993, and an additional facility was built across Eastlake Avenue in 1998. ZymoGenetics currently hopes to expand their facilities to the north of the new building. An efficient expansion would require the vacation of an unimproved right-of-way, a portion of Bellevue Avenue East.

The project team is currently in the pre-petition stage of the street vacation process. Some of the project's neighbors include Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Sound Transit. The next steps for the team include taking a detailed look at the neighborhood plan, and contacting the neighborhood to determine what types of amenities should be proposed. At the time of the briefing, the team stated that they had not yet had conversations with the neighborhood about their preliminary proposal.

The landscape architect believes that connections, between open spaces, parks, and public transit, should be considered an amenity. Eastlake is a busy arterial, linking the University Bridge to downtown. Volunteer Park and Lakeview Cemetery are open spaces within the Eastlake community. The team discussed the loss of connections from Volunteer Park to Lake Union and Seattle Center. The construction of I-5 in 1962 reduced the number of residential units in the community and severed the community's connection to the east.

The ZymoGenetics facility is at the southern gateway to the Eastlake community. The density within this area is changing, and there are many new office buildings under construction. However, there is not a large residential community in the southern area of Eastlake. The light rail system or the monorail could potentially be located along Eastlake Avenue. I-5 is a significant influence on the character of this area, and WSDOT requires twenty-five feet of clearance for access to I-5.

Through prior development, ZymoGenetics provided other public amenities. The company funded a public walkway and small boat launch at the waterfront. They have also helped the community leverage Matching Funds to develop a major art piece. ZymoGenetics strives to be a good neighbor, and believes that the site is important, as it is the southern gateway to the Eastlake community. A new building would provide considerable stability to the severe grade at this site.

The architecture consultant completed a feasibility study following the company's strategic vision plan, and 30,000 net square feet of scientific research space would be required by 2004. Because of the nature of the use of these facilities and the need to share certain types of infrastructure, the additional square footage should be located in close proximity to the existing facilities. The current Master Use Permit would only allow 26,000 gross square feet. The vacated portion of Bellevue Avenue East would allow the team to use the infrastructure that was built in Phase I, and build more efficient floor plates. Phase II construction would take advantage of the entry and loading areas that were built in Phase I, and the second research wing would extend to the north. Phase II construction would not affect the views in the neighborhood; the floor to floor heights would match that of the existing building. The new building would probably contain three floors of laboratories and some office space.

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Would like to know the nature of the conversation with WSDOT and King County, who own property adjacent to the potential site.
  - Proponents stated that WSDOT owns land adjacent to I-5, and King County owns a small sliver of adjacent land. Further stated that King County has signed the petition for the street vacation, and is willing to sell the small sliver of land to ZymoGenetics. WSDOT is reluctant to relinquish all of their property, but the team indicated that WSDOT agrees in concept with the vacation proposal. Proponents would be able to meet their needs through the street vacation. Through this development, ZymoGenetics may deed some of this adjacent land back to WSDOT so that they would have a parallel corridor along I-5.
- Recognizing that the existing property would only yield 26,000 gross square feet of building, and that the new building would require 57,000 gross square feet, would like to know if the potential vacation

would yield over twice as much area needed for this development.

- Proponents stated that it would, but the existing land, an odd triangular shape, would not allow the team to propose an efficient building. The area of the proposed vacated street is 7,600 square feet, and the grade of this street is approximately 30%. Further stated that the existing Master Use Permit (MUP) allows Phase II construction that would not extend into the right-of-way.
- Would like the team to explain the impacts of the slope to the Phase II construction.
  - Proponents stated that the current retaining wall would continue to include the potential site, and the team is concerned about the appropriate construction season, noting the delicate nature of the site.
- Commends the ZymoGenetics for being such a good Eastlake neighbor through the improvement of the historic building and the art piece. Would like to know what the team hopes to provide as a public benefit.
  - Proponents stated that there would soon be a meeting with Eastlake Community Council to assist in determining a benefit that would be valuable for the community. The benefit may be at the new building, or off-site. Many connections in the community were lost when I-5 was built. Some street ends could become small pocket parks. The site is zoned industrial, and this is the reason why the team is considering off-site benefits.
- Recognizes that the vacated area, while it is a steep, overgrown slope, does offer a respite in the built environment, and there are benefits to retaining this break.
  - Proponents stated that there are redwoods to the north that muffle the noise and pollution from I-5; the team could reforest this edge. Further stated that a park would be more appropriate to the north, closer to the residential community.
- Believes that access to Lake Union would be a viable benefit for the neighborhood. Hopes that there may be an opportunity to develop additional small spaces along the waterfront.
- Feels that WSDOT is a key player and an important neighbor to the north. Encourages the team to explore opportunities for improving and upgrading this property, and offers assistance to the team if they try to work with WSDOT.
- Would like to know if, at this block, there are opportunities for connections to the east.
  - Proponents stated that the I-5 Express Lanes are at-grade to the east.
- Believes that, if the team develops the project with appropriate neighborhood input and proposes public benefits, the vacation and resulting development does not seem unreasonable.
- As the team develops the project, encourages the team to analyze the pedestrian movement and public access within the site and the neighborhood. Hopes that the public benefits are truly public. Encourages the team to create public benefits that would not otherwise be there, rather than simply improving unimproved streets.
- Encourages the team to take advantage of different transportation programs to mitigate the growth of this facility.
  - Proponents stated that ZymoGenetics does work with programs to reduce the number of cars coming into the city.

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**20 Sept 2001 Project: Design Review Board**

Phase: Briefing

Presenters: Brad Gassman, CityDesign

Vince Lyons, Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU)

Cheryl Sizov, CityDesign

Time: 1 hour

(SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00248)

**Summary:** The Commission appreciates the thorough briefing on the current state of the Design Review Program. As the Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use reviews and evaluates the program, the Commission offered its support to ensure that the value-added aspects of neighborhood-based design review are recognized. The Commission would like to be briefed again once the evaluation and recommendations are drafted.

*“The City of Seattle Design Review process requires that certain new construction projects undergo a discretionary review of their siting and design characteristics, based on a set of City-wide design guidelines. Design Review provides a forum for a neighborhood and a developer to work toward achieving a better community through attention to simple design principles. Design Review is not intended to resolve disputes about zoning. It is about good communities and how new development can contribute positively to neighborhoods. Design guidelines offer a flexible tool, an alternative to prescriptive zoning requirements, which will allow new development to respond better to the distinctive character of its surroundings. Design Review is a component of a Master Use Permit application.*

*Design Review has three principal objectives:*

- 1) to encourage better design and site planning to enhance the character of the city and ensure that new development sensitively fits into neighborhoods;*
- 2) to provide flexibility in the application of development standards; and*
- 3) to improve communication and participation among developers, neighbors and the City early in the design and siting of new development.”*

-Client Assistance Memo (CAM) 238

There are eight Design Review Boards for seven districts, with a total of 38 members. On average, fifteen to twenty Design Review Board (DRB) members must be replaced every year, or re-nominated for a second term. For the next six months, staff at the Department of Design Construction and Land Use (DCLU) are working to identify ways by which the DRB program can be improved. Thus far, the DRB program has proven to be successful; there has been a substantially lower incidence of citizen appeals of land use decisions compared to the period before Design Review. Currently, DCLU staff is working to train the Land Use planners to better represent the DRB design concerns to the internal DCLU design staff.

In the current process, first, early design guidance Board meetings are held to set the design parameters of a project. Through the subsequent DRB process, the design team responds to these guidelines, and the Land Use planners incorporate the responses into their decisions. Typically, a project can move through in two meetings, and the LU planners keep track of the DRB decisions and guidelines. The Land Use planners also work with the DCLU Inspectors to enforce the guidance of the DRB.

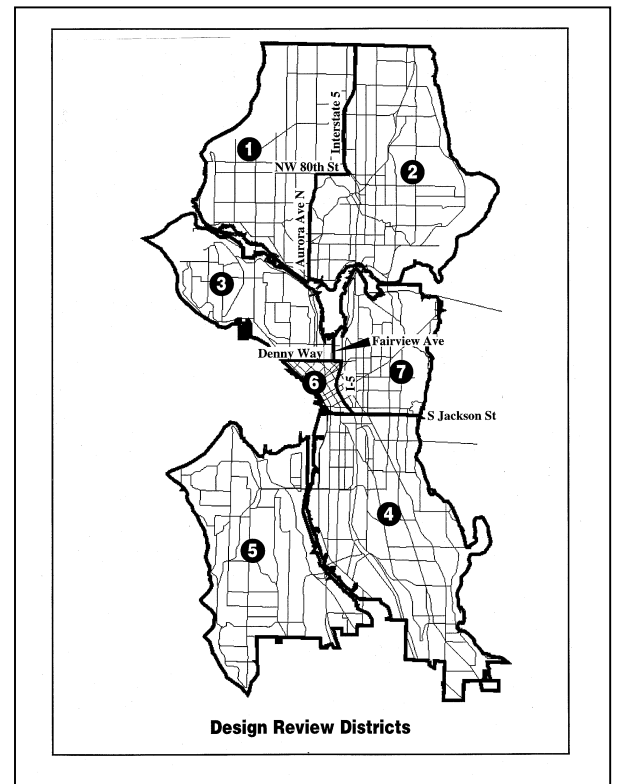
DCLU staff is also working to improve the DRB recruitment and training process for the seven district Boards and the one at-large Board. Boardmembers serve two-year terms, but there is much attrition. The team is also investigating a previous Design Commission review of the Design Review Board program, to



determine if the concerns and recommendations identified are still valid. This evaluation, and evaluation of the administrative procedures will continue throughout the year; a report will be developed at the conclusion of this assessment process. DCLU staff would also like to develop the awareness of the program.

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Would like to know the time commitment requirements of the boardmembers.
  - DCLU staff stated that each Board meets twice monthly, from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm. During each session, the Board reviews two projects.
- Believes that the DRB program is administratively complex.
- Would like to know why the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) cannot provide staff support for evening meetings.
  - DCLU staff stated that many voices are often trying to give the Design Review Board different advice and direction that is not consistent. Hopefully, these communication concerns will be resolved. DCLU staff is currently working to improve Board recruitment, the Design Review process, public community outreach, program administration, and the general effectiveness and efficiency of the DRB program. The final report will address all of the issues in these categories.
- Encourages the team to develop working relationships with professional organizations (e.g. AIA, APA, ASLA) or larger firms and corporations, so that there is an opportunity to recruit boardmembers from these larger groups.
- Believes that focusing on long-term issues would help with the policy and programmatic concerns with the DRB program.
- Believes that the largest complaint of the DRB program is inconsistency. Hopes that there will be consistent staff and consistency in the boardmembers and their comments. Is concerned that if a Land Use planner is the DCLU contact staff for the DRB, there will be a conflict of concerns if this Land Use planner also plays the regulatory role for this project.
  - DCLU staff stated that they are interested in trying to identify a single point of contact for project design teams for DRB projects, in addition to a Land Use planner project manager. Further stated that the DRB program is DCLU's public face. The Design Review Board meetings should not focus on neighborhood concerns about views or parking; this is something the DRB needs to educate the public on. The DRB and the community should work together to tell the design team what design considerations are most important, how the project design should change.
- Hopes that DCLU staff, once the report on the DRB program has been completed, will encourage the DRB chairs to come to City Council and explain that additional staff support is needed for the



program to work in the way it was intended.

- Believes that continuing education credits could be a way to encourage further recruitment for the Design Review Board program.
- Believes that Seattle is a very democratic city, and many citizens are willing to volunteer. Believes that the City could provide more direction for those seeking to volunteer or serve their city in this civic opportunity.
  - DCLU staff stated that the DRB program is currently trying to identify a regular meeting location in every neighborhood; this is one means by which to improve this opportunity.